DWBULLETIN
THE MONTHLY NEWS 'ZINE
Nº 48 £1·20 OCTOBER 1987

`OPEN AIR´ CHARADE

DWB HAS RECEIVED MANY LETTERS FROM DISGRUNTLED READERS COMPLAINING THAT THE SPECIAL DOCTOR WHO-ORIENTATED EDITION OF THE BBC's 'OPEN AIR' BROADCAST ON SEPTEMBER 29th WAS 'SET UP".

Having analysed the programme carefully and speaking to some of the fans who actually phoned-in in an attempt to put their questions to John Nathan Turner, Sylvester McCoy and Bonnie Langford, we have concluded from the facts available that the programme was indeed one-sided in only airing calls of a predominantly positive or sycophantic nature.

By definition Open Air is a programme that serves to give ordinary members of the public the opportunity to praise or criticise programme makers and / or the stars directly. Since this was a rare chance of having JN-T 'on the spot' publically, one would have hoped that this definition would have applied. It didn't. Here is a subjective summary of events:

The brief morning edition at 8.40 a.m. began lightheartedly with John Nathan-Turner explaining the work that went into the making of the Tetraps. Following this a group of 10-11 year olds were interviewed (presumably a camera-team at PanoptiCon would have produced criticism too strong for John to take ?) and ironically, as it was to turn out, were among the most vociferous of the day's critics, including comments ranging from "DOCTOR WHO isn't popular" and "McCoy looks like he has just come out of a comedy programme..." which would seem to confirm Michael Grade's believe that DOCTOR WHO "is not attracting a new generation." Nathan-Turner casually dismissed the children's arguments by suggesting that given a few weeks they should hopefully change their minds. The first call that followed praised Sylvester and the new titles — JN-T was pleased. But then a viewer from Glasgow, Andrew James, made Nathan-Turner glow when he called the show old and tired and is "now reduced to a second-rate pantomime with poor scripts and ham acting ." (During this call whispering by interviewer Patti Caldwell could be heard but was inaudible). Andrew's last comment seemed like an excellent idea: To "rerun the show from 1970 onwards so JN-T could have 16 years to think up new ideas"!! Nathan-Turner, however, calmly brushed aside this lighthearted suggestion proclaiming that with McCoy the show now has "a new lease of life" and then, for some bizarre reason, he proceeded to enquire about Andrew's age — to find out whether he enjoyed the years he likes when he was much younger !?! Maybe JN-T missed the point because Andrew obviously DID like the show when he was younger . . . at least more so than the 10 and 11 year olds earlier watching DOCTOR WHO now, so JN-T evidently failed to spot the flaw in his argument !! Andrew was invited in to the studio for the main show later on — this was going to be some battle , or so we thought . . . In all, this 15 minute taster seemed like a fairly balanced hors-d'œuvre to the main course at 12.30 . . .

However, in the intervening 3 hours, a directive was obviously issued as the debate was to change direction, as reader Nick Cooper — who called in to Open Air to complain about John Nathan-Turner's inference that long-term viewers suffer from defectively "rose-tinted" memories — recalls: *"Mine , and no doubt countless other critical calls from viewers were strategically ignored."* As proof of this, reader Sheldon Collins was just one of the people to phone-in to Open Air and recounts: *"I rang in to voice my critical opinions and the telephonist said 'Oh, not another one annoyed with John Nathan-Turner'"*, echoing similar replies to other callers suggesting that out of the hundreds of calls the Open Air switchboard was

(Continued Page 4...)

PANOPTICON VIII

Ace meets the fans...

5.1m and falling

EPISODE ONE OF TIME AND THE RANI WAS SEEN BY 5,100,000 PEOPLE PLACING IT AT NUMBER SEVENTY IN THE TOP 100.

However a million (or 20%) of viewers deserted this story by episode two with only 4,200,000 tuning in putting the show at number 85. Over the same period Coronation Street on Monday actually increased its audience by about 1,000,000, beating Wednesday's episode which is usually seen by more people.

Commenting on Open Air about the 5.1 rating, JN-T said: *"Our figure for the first week was 5.1m . . . it does show there is still a support for the programme in that timeslot."* A statement by Jonathan Powell was was then read out on air concerning the new time-slot : *"We don't invest good money in a series just to throw it away . We think it provides complementary entertainment, particularly for younger members of the audience who tend not to watch Coronation Street."*

STOP PRESS: BOTH THE BBC's PRESS AND DUTY OFFICES HAVE DENIED A REPORT IN THE SUN NEWSPAPER AT THE BEGINNING OF OCTOBER CLAIMING THAT : *" TELLY TIME TRAVELLER Dr WHO IS TO BE EXTREMINTAED AFTER AN AMAZING 24 YEARS, IT WAS REVEALED LAST NIGHT. IT IS BEEB BOSSES — NOT THE DALEKS —* *(Cont'd P.4)*

Behind the '60s Scene

MAKING UP !

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No doubt you will be expecting me to eat my words as the first ratings for Season 24 fall way below my predicted six million average. I offer absolutely no apology except to say that with all the positive signals we had been receiving over the past six months or so (in relation to the casting of a new Doctor and script editor) I was the last person to expect the show to return as a full blown parody of its former self. JN-T must be pleased with himself (well no-one else is, except his mum) in that he has finally fully implemented his objective of turning DOCTOR WHO into a third rate pantomime, with Sylvestor McCoy — like Colin Baker before him — falling victim to Nathan-Turner's ring-master attired approach to production.

One of our most popular items since our return has been our Special Offers service. Indeed it's so popular that unfortunately we have to return some orders that come in late. We try to judge the total response from the first fortnight's replies so unless you send your order within a fortnight of the issue being published we cannot guarantee to still have what you require. Finally, I must reiterate that if you write to us, for whatever reason, you must enclose an SAE if you require a reply otherwise your query, regretfully, will go unanswered. — GARY

D.W.B#48, OCTOBER 1987

COVER — OPEN AIR CHARADE

2: BEHIND THE '60s SCENE — Making up ! (Top) Prolific make-up supervisor Sonia Markham applies the final touches to a Monoid (THE ARK, 1966) and (below) George A. Cooper being made-up for the part of Cherub (THE SMUGGLERS, 1966) by assistant Christine Mary Clare.

3: WHOCHAT — Including a report on yet more in the endless line of 'WHOperts' disgusted at how the show has evolved under JN-T.

4-5: NEWS — Including exclusive news on DOCTOR WHO — The Movie and the complete unedited version of DWAS Co-ordinator Andrew Beech's Daily Mail article.

6-7: LETTERS, PART 5 of our comic strip adaption of PYRAMIDS OF MARS; the all-time Tom Baker classic!

8-10: PANOPTICON VIII — A photo report on the biggest fan event of the British calender.

11: ANALYSIS — The 1986 Series Survey Results.

12-13: INTERVIEW — It is a year since we featured our interview with Colin Baker anticipating the reaction to the long-awaited return of DOCTOR WHO. Much has happened in that year and we give Colin the chance to give his interpretation of the turbulent events that gradually unfolded as well as putting the record straight concerning 'that' Sun interview.

14-15: REVIEW — TIME AND THE RANI by Justin Richards, plus your views on Season 24's opening story and star ratings reflecting the general reaction of Fandom towards this story.

16: SPECIAL DWB OFFER 5 — Another literary offer this month with the award-winning SKARO available in a limited back issue print-run and two more specials in the sell-out Zerinza series.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS TO THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS: Colin Baker, BBC Photo Sales, Andrew Beech, Jeremy Bentham, Marion Breeze, Robert Cope, Antony Howe, Simon Lydiard, Justin Richards, Tim Rideout, Andrew Szabo, Rod Ulm & BARB.

PUZZLE CORNER

What do the following companions all have in common: DODO, ZOE, LIZ SHAW, LEELA, ROMANA≠1, ADRIC, NYSSA and MEL ? Because no-one was able to fathom out the answer to last month's puzzle, the set of Whovian Times are again the prize for the first correct entry pulled out of the mailbag.

LAST MONTH'S ANSWER: The stories listed all featured ex-wives of actors who have played the Doctor in different roles (Jean Marsh in THE CRUSADE and THE DALEKS' MASTER PLAN, Lalla Ward in THE ARMAGEDDON FACTOR and WARRIORS' GATE, and LIZA GODDARD in TERMINUS).

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Up to the next Winter Special please send £3 70 to the above address (US-$7 50).

NEXT ISSUE: With little hope of DOCTOR WHO surviving beyond the 25th Season under the current BBC regime, we launch our campaign strategy in conjunction with the DWAS to fight for the life of the Doctor . . . plus PARADISE TOWERS reviewed, the Barry Letts and Terrance Dicks interview and news of our exciting 40 page 50th / Christmas issue . . . (Published November 9th)

ADVERTISING RATES & DETAILS: As last issue (or send an SAE).

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DAVISON LABELS TODAY'S DOCTOR WHO "A VARIETY SHOW IN SPACE"!

John Nathan-Turner's style of production has once more come under attack, this time from the guest stars and experienced television makers who attended DWAS' PanoptiCon VIII. It is probably just as well Nathan-Turner failed to put in an appearance since virtually nobody — including the actors (or puppets) who have worked under him — had a kind word to say about the current all-time low standard of the programme.

Most panels contained guests who, obviously still great fans of the programme, are deeply concerned about the developments of the last few years, some of which are also touched upon in the main PanoptiCon VIII report in the centre pages.

Such is the extent to which this ill-feeling has spread that even two Nathan-Turner cast Doctors found it difficult to hide their obvious dissatisfaction. Colin Baker, still primarily a staunch supporter of JN-T, nonetheless was clearly bitter in his belief that he would have been more successful had he been allowed to place his own interpretation on the role of the 6th Doctor rather than the character influenced by Nathan-Turner, a sentiment echoed by any rationally-minded person. His feelings towards DOCTOR WHO today was best answered when he announced he did not tune in to episode one, preferring Coronation Street instead! However, Peter Davison had seen the previous Monday's episode and he was not impressed with what he saw. While he concedes that Sylvester McCoy could be an excellent Doctor — when freed, no doubt, by Nathan-Turner's hindrance — he feels that the show built around McCoy leaves a great deal to be desired, coming across as, to quote, *"A variety show in space!"*. Being such an ambitious actor constantly involved in different projects, it is easy to understand Davison's bewilderment that Nathan-Turner is "still there ?!?".

Other stars from the Nathan-Turner era were also openly critical. Nicola Bryant, now freed from the constraints imposed by JN-T which included making her lie about the fact she was married as long ago as 1983 and that she is, in fact, totally English, said of the ending of MINDWARP: *"I acted, it was the first opportunity in three years !"*. Tony Selby, who is still involved in the programme and stands to lose the most, was nevertheless moved to remark that the programme is increasingly resembling a game / quiz show, and he did nothing to hide his feelings on the dubious casting of Bonnie Langford . . .

However, the most damning criticisms came from former writers of the programme who, like many others, have pinpointed the major problem exactly: the lack of good plots and acting . Bill Emms, pulling no punches, shrewdly likened today's DOCTOR WHO to *". . . a cross between Kiddie's Corner and Amateur Playhouse."* He had also tuned into McCoy's first episode to be prepared for the convention, but he gave the impression that he won't be watching any more . . .

Victor Pemberton also watched the 25 minutes of pure panto , and it is to this experienced writer that DOCTOR WHO should take its lead. Indeed, at PanoptiCon he seemed to have already become somewhat of a 'folk hero', all of his comments being greeted with rapturous applause. As Victor argued, whether a programme is being made in 1967 or 1987, the most important aspects will always be strong scripts, good acting and effective direction, which as Victor so correctly stated are aspects all but sadly absent from DOCTOR WHO because of Nathan-Turner's warped obsession with making the show look "pretty". As Victor has said before, television cannot hope to compete with the cinema in the field of special effects, therefore it must offer the alternative in the form of well-acted and interesting scripts. That was the magic formula behind DOCTOR WHO's success for 17 years, until Nathan-Turner cast his shadow of doom on the programme. It simply is not enough to have flashy titles and effective incidental music.

Apparently Andrew Cartmel, the new script editor, was in the audience. It is to be hoped that Cartmel possesses an important quality that Nathan-Turner clearly doesn't: the ability to listen, to listen to those more experienced than the present production team, although it is sadly probably too late now...

IS PETER HAINING "THE PLAGIARIST OF DOCTOR WHO" ?

Although we are now spared of the atrocious DOCTOR WHO Annual, the normally quality-minded W.H.Allen seem set in continuing to release Peter Haining's hollow, depthless works cashing in (surprise, surprise) on each new season every September . Last year, it is alleged, he got away with plagiarising many of Richard Marson's (also alleged!) interviews for DWM for his turgid DOCTOR WHO File. For his latest effort (although one suspects most of the effort actually came from David Howe) we believe he has attempted to pass off DWB's acclaimed Sydney Newman interview (#41/42) as his own. We are, to say the least , furious, and await W.H.Allen's explanation on this matter. We hope it isn't true and really would like to believe he is the "Historian of DOCTOR WHO"(sic) or will the fly-leaf on his next masterpiece have to be changed to read "The Plagiarist of DR WHO"...

(...cont'd)
receiving, most were of a critical nature and so you would subsequently expect to see this reflected in the programme . But what followed at 12.30 p.m. was 25 minutes of a seemingly badly-rehearsed cover-up with carefully vetted calls totally unrepresentative of those that had been received (it isn't known whether JN-T played a part in this debacle, although it is rumoured he prevented the inclusion of fans into the studio audience).

To begin with, Andrew James strangely never made it to the studio, and before he could utter another word over the phone he was conveniently cut-off! JN-T was thus able to insult him further without the fear of retaliation by repeating: *"I think that, quite often, the memory cheats. Everybody who's ever watched the series has an era that is their favourite , and I think that in a way—maybe 15 or 20 years later —the appreciation of it in retrospect is perhaps a little cloudy because at the same time the viewers are ageing and I was just interested to find out how old Andrew was—17 years ago he was probably at a very impressionable age...".* Reader Darren Short was one of the thousands of viewers ready to throw a brick at their TV sets after this comment: *"The whole embarrassing exercise smacked of a set-up, with JN-T predictably trying to discredit the memories of those viewers who praised the superior '60s and '70s programmes, whilst not actually bothering to defend the programme which HE produces."* However , JN-T couldn't have looked more foolish when he concluded: *"I would like to add that as something of a pantomime expert, because I write and direct it usually at Christmas, I see no similarity whatsoever between DOCTOR WHO and pantomime."*!!!

Among the calls that were subsequently aired came from a housewife complaining that her cherubs were too young to stay up for the new time-slot, someone wanting Bonnie to stand up and twirl so they could see her unusual dress properly, a novelty call from Holland (obviously inserted to plug the BBC's European cable service), an enquiry about the proposed film, a complaint about, of all things, the new theme tune and an over-zealous 11 year old schoolboy, all basically echoing the latter's opinion that DOCTOR WHO is "absolutely fantastic!".

Obviously not properly briefed on the bias that the show was supposed to be taking, Patti Caldwell attempted to give "Wally of the Week" Sylvester McCoy and even JN-T a hard time , but when she failed she gave a bemused look and said, *"I thought we had people complaining—everybody so far thinks it's wonderful!"*. She then foolishly asked: *"You must have gone through (a change of Doctor) many times now ?"*, to which he nauseatingly responded : *"Well, I've been with the show solidly for 11 years, 8 as producer..."*, and in reply to her question about the possibility of a 25th Season, as DWB reported a month ago he said: *"Most definitely, yes, we can exclusively reveal here and now we will be doing a new series next year with Sylvester McCoy."* He announced this in such a way that we should feel privileged that the BBC have scheduled a new series—in the days before JN-T we took such a thing for granted...

In conclusion, co-presenter Mike Shaft pretended to assess the overall number of calls for or against and delivered a blatant contradiction in announcing, *"I would say it's very balanced actually."* (Interestingly the for or against the new-look Star paper debate the following day, actual figures were quoted—70 for, 2 against—so why not for DOCTOR WHO ?).

We must make it clear that in this article we do not object to people phoning in to Open Air praising the present series, but what we DO object to is the blatant way in which Open Air attempted to cover-up critical calls and in so doing presenting an imbalanced and thus distorted programme.

So much for democracy at the BBC !!

MOVIE NEWS HOTS UP

Coast to Coast, in conversation with John Peel at a convention in New York, confirmed they are looking to a budget of £5m for the proposed DOCTOR WHO — The Movie for special effects alone, and the management revealed they have shortlisted among their list of actors to play the screen Doctor the popular stage and screen Academy Award-winning actor Tom Conti.

Negotiations are currently in discussion with BBC Enterprises over the structure and format of the film and a formal announcement of the film's realisation is expected to be made within the next few months.

(...cont'd) WHO WILL SCRAP THE TIME LORD AND HIS TARDIS AT THE END OF THE CURRENT SERIES." DWB contacted The Sun reporter , Kevin O'Sullivan, who admitted he may have been a little premature in his report but insisted: *"If Season 25 does go ahead because of the publicity value then you can guarantee it WILL be the last—there's no way they (the BBC) will change their minds."*

SEASON 24 RE-EDITS

Several re-edits have had to be performed on current episodes of DOCTOR WHO, in the wake of directives laid down by Home Secretary Douglas Hurd and as a result of the Hungerford massacre, on the levels of gore and violence depicted in prime time television. In particular cuts have been made to the last episode of DRAGONFIRE to eliminate lingering shots on the face-melting sequence forming part of the episode's climax. This was the story rewritten to tone down the overt Nazi references (one character was originally called "Borman").

However, a violent sequence incorporating a knitting needle originally scheduled for a cut has been retained after the director argued for its inclusion on the grounds of its necessity to the plot.

BONNIE FINED

Bonnie Langford was fined £40 on October 1st for speeding on her way to rehearsals (speeding as in driving too fast!).

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

John Nathan-Turner recently announced some of his tentative plans for Season 25 while touring with the US exhibition . Among the ideas he is considering is the possibility of a robotic or alien (nonhumanoid) companion, the return of the sonic screwdriver but in a different form, the shooting of a story in America and the return of the Daleks, this time with the ability to hover. He also stated that the 14 episode season seems a permanent fixture, but insists that DOCTOR WHO isn't being persecuted as it is the only British TV show with as many as 14 episodes.

PIP 'N' JANE KONG

In summing up its review of TIME AND THE RANI, the Daily Expressed likened the script writers to ". . . a remedial class of chimps", adding, "You'd almost think the B B C wanted to get rid of the famous Doctor."

WORZEL RETURNS

The series of Worzel Gummidge which Jon Pertwee filmed in New Zealand has just commenced screening on Channel 4, Sunday mornings at 11.30 a.m..

MOORE APPROACHED FOR 25

Award-winning comic - writer, Alan Moore, revealed at Comic-Con that he has been asked to submit a possible story outline for Season 25. He wrote some of the early comic-strips for Marvel's DOCTOR WHO Weekly.

SECOND SEASON FOR 'STAR COPS'

The BBC, pleased with Star Cops which eventually picked up satisfactory ratings towards the end of its run, have commissioned a new series in excess of episodes of the first one. It will enter production towards the end of the year.

DAVROS AT THE CROSSROADS

Crossroads producer Bill Smethurst is bringing yet another of his former colleagues over from The Archers , noneother than Terry(Davros)Molloy. He will resurrect the character of Stan Harvey in place of Ted Clayton who has refused to return to the show which ends next March.

RETURN OF THE PHOTO COVER ?

Although Target's forthcoming novelisation of TIME AND THE RANI will feature a photographic cover depicting the Tetraps, a decision has yet to be reached over the rest of the Sylvester McCoy book covers .

October 15th sees the release of BUILD THE TARDIS, a pop up book that enables you to make an authentic Tardis without glue and scissors costing £3 95. Finally, the paperback division Comet will release The Key to Time this month and The Early Years in January at £5 95 .

TITLE CHANGING

The official title for story 3 this season has switched back to DELTA AND THE BANNERMAN. It was almost to have been rather more imaginatively called Flight of the Chimeron.

SCRIPT BOOKS SOON

Titan Books are soon to release the first in their series of books featuring the actual TV scripts of DOCTOR WHO stories. The first, scheduled for next month, appropriately features the pilot episode and TRIBE OF GUM scripts. (More news on this new project next month).

TWO NEW VIDEOS COMING...

BBC Video will be releasing a further two titles by next April, probably in February . As yet no titles have been confirmed and the cost of the tapes won't be known till all the clearances have been obtained, although B B C Video hope to retain the popular budget price of £9 99.

(Sylvester McCoy on the likelihood of a Seven Doctors anniversary story): *"We might get together. In the high echelons of the WHO office they are talking about it at this very moment." (CBG)*

On Saturday, September 12th, The Daily Mail published a scathing article on the current state of DOCTOR WHO written by noneother than the present DWAS Co-ordinator Andrew Beech and coincidentally coinciding with the first day of the annual DWAS PanoptiCon . The newspaper originally approached the production office with a view to doing a page spread in the wake of episode 1 of the new season, but instead the office pointed the Mail—as it turned out, rather ironically!—in the direction of the DWAS, whereupon Beech broke away from usual DWAS etiquette and proceeded to compile an article openly attributing the reasons for the show's failure at the feet of the production team, notably John Nathan-Turner. Although billed, Nathan-Turner subsequently failed to appear at the convention and recently confided to a mutual associate that he wants nothing more to do with Fandom, although it isn't known whether these incidences are linked to the article. Some fans openly criticised Beech at PanoptiCon, accusing him of abusing his position as Co-ordinator and speaking out on behalf of the Society, but as you can see below in no way does the article infer that he does so. The Daily Mail were subsequently delighted with the feature and regretted they couldn't publish it complete, so Andrew has kindly allowed us to reprint it in full here for the benefit of readers who do not belong to DWAS.

THIS MORNING, some 750 members of the DOCTOR WHO Appreciation Society (DWAS—present membership around 2,500) will sit down to their eighth annual convention at Imperial College, London. Without doubt, THE hot topic will be the return , after nine months, of the World's longest running Science Fantasy television series and the performance of the new Doctor , played by Sylvester McCoy. Contrary to popular belief, fans of Science Fiction in general, and DOCTOR WHO in particular, are not maladjusted weirdos who wander around in their own little world wearing a long scarf and a floppy hat. I myself am a "thoroughly respectable" Solicitor and can count Barristers, Chartered Accountants, Doctors, Company Directors and Computer Systems Analysts among my colleagues.

The pantomime antics witnessed by viewers on Monday evening are bound to trigger further discussion upon a topic which Michael Grade brought sharply into the limelight two and a half years ago—the present state of DOCTOR WHO. Personally, and in spite of one or two moments when Sylvester McCoy showed the glimmerings of a believable performance, the sight of the Doctor grinning inanely, prancing and doing pratfalls over non-existent obstacles, uttering lines such as "absence makes the nose grow longer" and making a cheap joke of the role does not inspire confidence.

As Co-ordinator of the DWAS, it is difficult to represent the views of a Society which is divided. There are those (usually the under 20's) who enjoy the bright colours, the starry cast and the glitzy "production values" which the show now boasts . Perhaps, never having seen in their original context, the early stories with William Hartnell, Patrick Troughton and Jon Pertwee, they cannot know what they are missing. Conversely, many others believe that there is something radically wrong with a show which 24 years ago had something indefinable, but sufficiently attractive to capture the hearts and imagination of the British public. Sadly, those legions of supportive viewers have now all but deserted the show. Why is this ?

On November 23rd 1963, two schoolteachers, intrigued by the odd behaviour of one of their pupils, followed her home and stumbled upon her grandfather. An alien fugitive, cut off from his rightful time and place by his inability to control the Tardis (even to the extent of repairing its chameleon circuit—hence the police box), the Doctor (portrayed by William Hartnell) was capricious, arrogant and unpredictable; an enigma who during the course of the following six years (three of them in the guise of Patrick Troughton as a more amiable prankster), introduced his audience to a universe which was vast, unexplored , dangerous and exciting. Not surprisingly for such a radical departure from the norm, the show was a smash hit. I would attribute this early success to many factors, but notably first the integrity with which the central character was played coupled with an air of mystery and intrigue long since lost , and secondly the drive of a production team not bound to a formula, which treated the show as a true drama production and yet tried out new ideas and methods, pushing at the boundaries of state-of-the-art television.

And what do we have now ? A newly regenerated buffoon surrounded by over bright lights and tinsel sets, who mutters about sending the Tardis in for her "bicentennial service" . Where did everything go so drastically wrong ?

Some have suggested it was a mistake on the part of former script editor Terrance Dicks to destroy the Doctor's anonymity by introducing the Time Lords (the Doctor's own race) in the final story of Patrick Troughton's Doctor in 1969. Others disagree, saying that more damage was done by the lack of imagination which, in the mid-1970's reduced the Time Lords from their quasi-omnipotent status to that of doddering old fogeys with a recognisably human culture (Interestingly enough, in the 1960's script editor Donald Tosh had suggested that the Doctor was an alien creature who had simply assumed human form for the time being!).

Another unfortunate development has been the sudden shrinking of the Universe. Perhaps this harks back to the time of the third Doctor, Jon Pertwee who took over from Patrick Troughton in 1970 and spent most of the next five years in exile on Earth, defending said planet from assorted alien assaults. Undoubtably a major influence was the film Star Wars — suddenly the Doctor (by now played by Tom Baker) knew so much about the Universe, and the Universe knew about him. More importantly, Star Wars marked a sudden change of emphasis away from the storyline (surely the lifeblood of the show) to the "look" of the programme—despite the fact that DOCTOR WHO can never hope to compete in terms of special effects. The absurd notion of replacing dramatic content with "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" style humour in the late 1970's (Douglas Adams script edited for a time) failed to do anything other than spur on the decline of the show. We have now reached the stage where the introduction of "guest stars" makes it impossible for the audience to suspend its disbelief any longer. Last week the producer reportedly hailed the programme as "the new Morecambe & Wise Show", saying "Everyone wants to do it"—and most of the fans despair.

Fatal errors have also been made in recent times in the casting of the lead role. Brilliantly successful though Tom Baker was, it was a mistake to keep him in the role for seven years. He had devastating charisma and presence, and to my knowledge is still America's favourite Doctor—but he put such an individual stamp on the role that his act was almost impossible to follow. It was an even bigger mistake to attempt to replace him with a watered-down character played by Peter Davison , whose credibility was impaired by his association with All Creatures Great and Small (although curiously I can see Robert Hardy as the Doctor) and the various television situation comedies in which he appeared around the same time. Davison has been tagged, unkindly, "the Wet Vet" and sadly, in his time, the Doctor degenerated into a kind of juvenile Biggles.

Both Colin Baker and Sylvester McCoy unquestionably have the acting ability to play the role well, but in each case there seems to be a malign influence persuading them (and the supporting cast) to "ham it up". A case in point is Kate O' Mara , who last played "the Rani" nearly four years ago in austere makeup and utilitarian leather costume. This week she reappeared in full Dynasty hairdo, shoulderpads and costume. Fortunately she is one of the few actresses with the talent to carry off the part (and indeed to carry most of the first episode).

Michael Grade caused a furore in 1985 when he announced that he was "unhappy" with certain aspects of DOCTOR WHO and postponed the series for eighteen months—bringing it back with the same production team. After eight years, no television producer can bring new enthusiasm and a fresh eye to DOCTOR WHO. It was surely time for new blood.

However, the fourteen part Trial of a Time Lord with Colin Baker followed and was seen by Grade as "some improvement, but I am still not happy.", perhaps an allusion to the all-time low ratings (one episode attracted a record low 3·7 million viewers —contrast Tom Baker at his height in 1975 with 14 million).The producer John Nathan-Turner has placed his own light entertainment interpretation upon the programme (as is his privilege), resulting in a plethora od spangles, sequins and lurex . And yet the viewing figures show that this approach is not popular. And yet the same production team remains. Why ?

The question arises whether or not Michael Grade actually has the power or the influence to do anything other than commission the series. As BBC Head of Drama, it is Jonathan Powell who decides which BBC staff make DOCTOR WHO, and his views have not been made public. One wonders whether or not there can be any truth in the speculation that Mr Powell has no time for a show which he inherited from before his time, and that DOCTOR WHO is simply caught up in some Dynastic power struggle at the BBC.

Some would say that DOCTOR WHO crossed the barrier between tightly plotted drama and specious light entertainment years ago. What is clear is that, whether through the short-sighted ineptitude of the planners or the excesses of the recent production teams, DOCTOR WHO (as a popular televison show) is slowly but surely being killed. I suspect that by scheduling the show against Coronation Street, the BBC may be hoping to kill it off for good after this season—or at most to allow it to limp into its 25th Anniversary next year before the end . Michael Grade said last week that "the jury is still out on this show", but he's making a tragic mistake. In the light of its versatile format, most of us are convinced that a change of production team and a return to serious plotting and good casting could well see the programme on its way to a most satisfactory regeneration.

Otherwise, perhaps the BBC would consider selling the rights to Channel 4 ?!...

NO ARTISTIC RIVALRY

ALISTER J. PEARSON, MARVEL COMICS

Thanks for DWB#47 which I have read from cover to cover and have thoroughly enjoyed. Thanks also for the generally complimentary feature about myself on page four, but I thought I'd better write to correct you over a number of details and also to bring you up to date with the latest news.

My painting for the cover of Nigel Robinson's THE UNDERWATER MENACE has been accepted and, as you stated, will appear next February. I was commissioned to do the cover for THE ULTIMATE FOE, but the painting I submitted could not be used because Michael Jayston and Lynda Bellingham required payment for their likenesses to be used—and this W.H.Allen were not prepared to do. (Nine days work down the pan!). I'm now about to do it again, this time depicting Mr Popplewick. Fortunately Geoffrey Hughes is a friend of Pip and Jane Baker and has said he would not require any payment.

"...expressed less than complimentary views on rival Andrew Skilleter's standard of work"? All I remember saying was I was not very impressed with the cover of DESTINY OF THE DALEKS and decided to do my own version, thinking to myself that if Skilleter could launch off from that, perhaps I could too! (Somebody in the audience at Leisure Hive 4 said that Andrew doesn't like that picture either). And far from being my rival, Andrew could soon be commissioning me to do some artwork for the long-awaited "Cyberbook". (The auction painting bought by David Banks could also be appearing).

The remainder of my poster series for DWM will not now be used as covers when they are printed as the new logo will be spread right across the top of the cover and would therefore obscure the upper third of each painting. I think it likely that the left hand Pertwee painting (the one I'm holding in my right hand) will be used. This was the original one which Marvel didn't like. Whenever I have my portfolio on display I usually take a quick vote (as I did at Leisure Hive) and the first version always wins!

I wanted to picture the Master (Delgado/Ainley/Pratt-Beevers) on the new poster with Sylvester McCoy, not Peter Davison, and the curt reply was: *"Dear AJP, Sorry, No, Sincerely, Anthony Ainley"* (he was a little more polite than you suggest!).

I'm planning to repaint Sylvester McCoy on the Seven Doctors painting as I'm far from happy with it. A lot of people have asked when this will be printed, but I've no idea. Marvel haven't even seen it yet (and Andrew was very impressed!). This month sees the publication of my latest effort for DWM which will feature McCoy and the two versions of the Rani.

ED: Talking of curt replies, we recently dared to obtain an interview from the notoriously reclusive Tom Baker and received this reply—

TOM BAKER, WESTMINSTER THEATRE

I'm far too busy and, I think, far too far away from DOCTOR WHO. Best wishes.

BLIND PRAISE

ANDREW HARDWICK, Leeds, W.YORKS

How gratifying to see JN-T getting what he deserves on Points of View, and how sickening to then learn from Anne Robinson that that particular letter-writer was in the minority. People are still blindly absorbing his garbage and praising it to the skies. The letters from these, perhaps well-intentioned, fans may be all Jonathan Powell needs to justify keeping JN-T on another year.

On to the new season and it's going to be interesting to hear the views of other readers on Sylvester McCoy's debut. Personally I'm less than impressed. I've tried to find something likeable about his portrayal and the best I could come up with is that the costume's an improvement (it's a little early to judge, I know, maybe I'll like McCoy by the end of PARADISE TOWERS...). After 2 episodes however I still find him utterly unconvincing—he just doesn't seem to have *any* presence. This is made worse by the casting of Kate O'Mara who overshadows him without even trying. I find myself looking back fondly on Colin Baker's portrayal—and I loathed his Doctor! But at least you knew Colin was *there*.

Exhibiting his usual brilliant judgement JN-T schedules an opener yet again guaranteed to scatter viewers to the other 3 channels for the next fourteen weeks. Following the title sequence—completely out of tune with the dignified, low budget drama serial that DOCTOR WHO is supposed to be (and very Morecambe & Wise)—we had the sight of that bloody quarry returning yet again! The last thing the programme needs, having let people down so badly last year, is to open with such an obvious indication that nothing has changed.

ED: If Points of View really had received a majority of positive reaction towards the opening episode, then why was one critical letter read out on air? Quite obviously for some reason the BBC were indulging in one of their favourite pastimes of misleading (or lying) to their viewers. Certainly the overwhelming consensus of opinion elsewhere (the press, the R.S.V.P. teletext page on Oracle and just general comments from non-fans who saw it) has been less than complimentary.

DODO BEATS MEL BY ONE EPISODE

DANIEL BLYTHE, Smarden, KENT

Whatever you say I'm still unhappy about the timeslot. Ratings of 6m or above you predict? Well, 6m isn't very good, is it? That was the figure Michael Grade quoted as being low enough to justify cancelling the show. I'd be prepared to eat my words, but only if the show gets more than, say, 9m viewers. There were days when we'd not have been happy with anything less (but that was when we had a decent producer, he added wistfully).

Last issue you said Mel, having lasted 20 episodes, would be the shortest reigning companion, but I think the accolade should go to Dodo (Jackie Lane) who left in part 2 of THE WAR MACHINES and hence lasted just 18 episodes, or 19 if you count her appearance at the very end of THE MASSACRE.

THE ULTIMATE ENEMY

SEAN PICKETT, Massachusetts, USA

The disclosure that purports JN-T as wanting to be the last producer (DWB#46) comes as no shock to me. A recent issue of Enlightenment stated: *"JN-T has declared he intends to remain for an eighth year if there is an anniversary special for the 25th Season in 1988"*!! Your news, combined with this statement bodes ill for the future of DOCTOR WHO. I was very deeply disturbed by the news of JN-T's intention to stay another year, and your news makes me almost ill. How anyone can be so egotistical and obsessed is beyond my comprehension. I can only assume he has become the Doctor's ultimate enemy and nothing less than the death of DOCTOR WHO will satisfy him.

The good news in #46 is it appears that renewed interest in the marketing of the show may save it. If only the BBC would save the Doctor from JN-T. It was also nice to see that Colin Baker can even impress you with his acting abilities, when he is freed of JN-T and a ridiculous costume. I wish Colin the best of luck with his acting career in the future.

HAM-FISTED PARODY

SID SMITH, Tyne and Wear, NEWCASTLE

I read in #46 the report you carried speculating JN-T's intention to be the last producer of DOCTOR WHO with a sense of despair. I have been watching DOCTOR WHO from the very beginning and so have seen many stories, good and bad, and noted numerous changes, not to mention the odd crisis. However in all that time I have never dreaded the return of the programme to our screen as I do now. In common with many other of your readers I am of the opinion that never before in the programme's history has DOCTOR WHO sunk to depths so low as it has done over the past 5 years. This process has gone on so long that I doubt whether a change of the entire regular cast or production team could do anything to salvage its credibility with the general viewing public. So what is to be done? Well let's get the present season out of the way and move onto the 25th anniversary—an extravaganza featuring all seven Doctors and a whole host of villains and monsters who team up to watch the destruction of the entire universe, only to be saved at the last minute by the Sacred Toe Nail Clippings of (you guessed) Rassilon. Yes, let's get that one out of the way so that JN-T can achieve his ambition and the show can be buried and forgotten about. After a couple of years maybe a season of repeats on BBC2 could go ahead?

I like the programme too much to be able to bear watching this embarrassing, hamfisted parody that now calls itself DOCTOR WHO.

UNPROFESSIONALISM RUNNING AMOK

JAY BADENHOOP, Wisconsin, USA

After reading your magazine avidly for 2 years now, I must write to warn you about your new column of reviewing fanzines. I read the page of script from TIME AND THE RANI reprinted from Star Begotten. The condition of DOCTOR WHO has degraded so much that as I read the scribbles by Jane Baker I laughed, but was sad because it took me a while to realise it actually WAS satire! At this point I could expect such unprofessionalism from the Bakers, so next time you'll have to label such items "SATIRE" in big neon letters!

Our favourite writer Pippinjane (good panto name, don't you think?) handling a regeneration episode is like letting Dangermouse's Penfold handle negotiations with the Soviet Union! I just hope Andrew Cartmel's other three writers are good ones.

I agree 100% with Jennifer Adams in her pointing out that Nathan-Turner's brought to DOCTOR WHO every problem he deliberately worked to remove in his first season as producer. What I don't understand is why he doesn't realize it? Is he really as unprofessional as your 'The Last Producer' column in the August issue proposes, or is it his only way of getting out of a job he would really like to escape?

I feel sorry for British fans who only have JN-T fare to watch. TRIAL OF A TIME LORD is playing here next month, but at least I can look forward to the Tom Baker Hinchcliffe episodes running after it!

BAD RIVALS

SIMON CUNNINGTON, WEST SUSSEX

As good as DWB is (like Mad magazine it's in a field of one!), your fanzine can't match the DWAS' CT in the unintentional hilarity stakes and (I hope) never will. For example, in the July issue there was an agreeably pompous ego-trip pretending to be a book review, written in the confident 'Go for it' tone one associates with US 'zines; technically and stylistically the piece is a study in bad writing (the clumsy phrasing in the opening sentence, through to a truly embarrassing portentous cliché at the end). Sadly this standard of review seems to be the standard for fanzine writers in this country. There are exceptions: Justin Richards and Jeremy Bentham of course, and a few others and I would suggest this may be one of the reasons for your popularity; it's not that you're so good, it's just that your rivals are SO BAD!!

CLASSY COVERS

PETER DOBSON, Leeds, YORKSHIRE

PLEASE, PLEASE! Keep the photo covers. Looking back through my many old DWBs at all the headline covers, none look so good as the recent copies since #43. I don't think DWB has ever looked so classy as it does now.

The Frame does it, so why not the best!

THE PYRAMIDS OF MARS: PART 5 OF ANDREW SZABO'S SPECIAL ADAPTION

MEANWHILE...
WHAT IS THAT THING?
AN OSIRAN WAR MISSILE
YOU MEAN IT FLIES?
BACK AT THE LODGE...
THE ROBOTS ARE DRAWING THEIR POWER FROM A CYTRONIC PARTICLE ACCELERATOR WHICH MUST BE IN SUTEKH'S TOMB!
BUT THAT OUT OF ACTION...
IT TRANSPOSES WITH IT'S PROJECTION—PYRAMID POWER!
AND HE'LL HAVE NO WORKFORCE! AND NO MISSILE!
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING FOR IT—SCARMAN CAME THROUGH THE SPACE-TIME TUNNEL... IT'S A TWO-WAY MECHANISM!
WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER...
LET'S GO SARAH!
IF YOU GO THROUGH IT SUTEKH WILL KILL YOU!
NO IT WOULDN'T! ALRIGHT THEN, WHAT WOULD BE BETTER?
TO BLOW UP THE PROJECTILE... I BELIEVE CLEMENTS KEPT A SUPPLY OF BLASTING GELIGNITE IN THE WOODS!
YOU THINK I'LL LET YOU DOWN AGAIN, DON'T YOU!
IF YOU WANT TO HELP—START UNWRAPPING THE BANDAGES ON THAT ROBOT!
NOW ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS FIND THE DOOR!
LATER...
WALKING INTO A DEFLECTION BARRIER IS LIKE WALKING INTO A BRICK WALL!
AH! I'VE FOUND IT!
A KEY... NO DOUBT BOOBY TRAPS...
THE DOCTOR LOCATES THE GENERATOR LOOP.
ARE YOU GOING TO HELP—OR JUST STAND THERE ADMIRING THE SCENERY?
YOUR SHOES NEED REPAIRING... AND I WASN'T ADMIRING THE SCENERY... I WAS WAITING FOR YOU TO TELL ME WHAT TO DO NEXT!
SUTEKH IS AWARE OF THE DOCTOR'S ACTION...
INTERFERENCE! INTERFERENCE!
JUST HOLD THE BACE... I DON'T WANT IT TO FALL. DEACTIVATING A GENERATOR LOOP WITHOUT A KEY... IT'S LIKE REPAIRING A WATCH WITH A CHISEL... ONE SLIP AND YOU'LL NEVER KNOW THE TIME AGAIN!

SARAH WATCHES WITH MOUNTING TENSION...
THE DOCTOR DEACTIVATES THE GENERATOR LOOP, POCKETING IT'S CORE...
THE BARRIER TO THE EAST HAS BEEN DEACTIVATED!
BUT THE HUMANS DO NOT HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE...
IT IS CLEAR THAT EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCE IS OPERATING!
THEN YOU SHALL HUNT DOWN AND DESTROY MY ENEMIES... THE ALIEN WHO DARES TO INTRUDE... THE HUMANS...
I HAVE ENDURED AN ETERNITY OF DARKNESS! I WILL NOT BE DENIED NOW!
JUST HOW POWERFUL IS SUTEKH, DOCTOR?
BIRDS, FISH, REPTILES ALL LIFE IS MY ENEMY... ALL SHALL PERISH UNDER THE REIGN OF SUTEKH THE DESTROYER!!
IF HE GETS FREE, THERE'S NOT A LIFEFORM IN THE GALAXY COULD STAND AGAINST HIM!
THE MISSILE MUST BE GUARDED... TWO SERVICERS MUST MAINTAIN CONSTANT VIGILANCE!
INSIDE!
SUTEKH WAS ONLY DEFEATED IN THE END BY THE COMBINED MIGHT OF 74-0 OF HIS FELLOW OSIRANS!
740 GODS? IT'S RECORDED IN THE TOMB OF THUTMOSE III!
MEANWHILE, LAWRENCE HAS SUCCEEDED IN UNRAVELLING THE SERVICER WHEN HE SENSES SOMEONE AT THE DOOR...
MARCUS! MARCUS, DON'T YOU KNOW ME? I'M YOUR BROTHER!
AS HORUS WAS BROTHER TO SUTEKH?
SUDDENLY, MARCUS SCARMAN IS CONFUSED...
LOOK! HERE WE ARE AS BOYS—YOU REMEMBER, DON'T YOU?
I...WAS MARCUS...
N-N-NNN-O-O! I AM SUTEKH!
I AM HIS INSTRUMENT SUTEKH THE DESTROYER SUTEKH, LORD OF DARKNESS...
NOW ALL THIS IS NONSENSE. YOU ARE MARCUS SCARMAN, PROFESSOR OF ARCHAEOLOGY... YOU WENT TO EGYPT AND FELL UNDER SOME SORT OF INFLUENCE...

FEATURE

PanoptiCon VIII

Few who attended the DWAS PanoptiCon VIII on the weekend of 12/13th September could fail to detect the pervasive, almost tangible effect upon the atmosphere created by the timing of the event itself. The regeneration period of the Doctor is always an equally unstable time for Fandom, and with PanoptiCon VIII arriving just days after episode one of TIME AND THE RANI, this was perhaps destined to polarize and heighten opinions and thus generating much heated debate among the 800+ attendees. Ironically the general feeling of fans' unacceptance of the current regime was by far overshadowed by the DWAS Co-ordinator Andrew Beech's Daily Mail article (covered elsewhere this issue) which was greeted with mixed feelings because of its impeccable timing and the inevitable boost it gave to the aforementioned wave of pessimism. This in turn arguably led to an air charged with accusations, derisions and recriminations against the programme, from both attendees and guests alike. The irony of having the sixth Doctor's tombstone adorn the stage became apparent, for virtually all the guests present, many of whom had seen the 1st episode, had nothing positive to say about the way DOCTOR WHO is being produced today with some even prophecying the death of the Doctor.

Not all was "doom and gloom" of course, for the organisers clearly intended to emulate the success of last year's event with an entertaining and packed programme. Credit must again go to Gordon Roxburgh and Paul West for the superb organisation of the convention programme, capitalizing on last year's stronger aspects like the venue itself—again the Imperial College—and the use of on-screen captions on screens placed strategically around the event handled by the ever-professional B-Tel. Other nice touches was the new method of being able to register any time throughout the weekend so no nightmare queues, and the convention managed to begin almost an hour late (how reassuring to see that some things never change !).

The master of ceremonies for the weekend was David Banks, applying a very professional and humorous touch to proceedings. After a screening of THE FACELESS ONES 3 and the French documentary, Nicola Bryant, Tony Selby and a slimline Colin Baker took to the stage. Being his first UK appearance since his unceremonious departure, Colin stated feelings of ambivalence about having accepted the role of the Doctor and he was also more forward in criticising his fellow professionals like Eric Saward and Michael Grade (the latter of whom, he claims, described WHO as "stale and tired" five years before joining the BBC !).But for some strange reason he remains a staunch supporter of JN-T who arguably did him far more damage. He echoed Selby's cries that JN-T was fighting the dictatorial BBC chiefs for the continuation of the show (surely if JN-T cared that much he'd have left long ago) and vociferously denied the show is being turned in to a pantomime on the grounds that it doesn't feature dames... This was followed by the newly cast Sophie Aldred (alias Ace) who gave us a brief resumé of her career up to date and then a Pertwee panel comprising of Barry Letts, Terrance Dicks, Don Houghton and Bob Baker took to the stage, all of whom showed a great understanding of the essential ingredients that go into making a good DOCTOR WHO script; Dicks explained how many times he had rejected solid sci-fi stories simply because they had not been 'WHOish' enough; Bob Baker described his and Dave Martin's immense dissatisfaction at not having been told of Omega's return (you know, the villain they created years ago) in ARC OF INFINITY and didn't find out till months after it had actually been screened; and Barry Letts explained how and why his WHO had not been allowed to slip into pastiche, for example Omega was originally called Ohm until it was realized that inverted the name spelt Who (what would he make of the blatant question mark insignia of today I wonder ?).

Graeme Harper was next to discuss his work, declaring that at least he refuses to let his productions veer towards pantomime, and then a filmed interview with Sylvester was broadcast which was greeted with mixed feelings from the audience, not surprising since he insisted on going off on yet another transatlantic jaunt instead of taking the opportunity of meeting the British fans that weekend (and no doubt memories of his less than auspicious debut added to the atmosphere). The day's events was rounded off with an artistic panel featuring Alister Pearson , Andrew Skilleter and Sandra Reid, a '60s costume designer who is holidaying from Australia. Andrew was there yet again to hype the non-materialisation of the CyberBook which is now scheduled to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Cybermen in 2066, and Sandra Reid (now called Alexandra Tynan) told a disbelieving audience that the Fish People were her favourite costumes !

The choice of viewing for the evening was either an interview with Chris Clough or the cabaret, the latter of which was a non-event consisting yet again of the same old routines by Richard Franklin and David Banks, although Alister Pearson made an inspiring debut with a couple of witty sketches (as in acting!). The auction—which included Hyperion III communicators, Tetrap statues and yet another Key to Time (bought by Andrew Beech for £1,300 !)—brought the evening, or rather early morning, to a close.

A few short hours later, Sunday's programme kicked of with what was, for many, the most long-awaited 25 minutes of the year as episode two of THE EVIL OF THE DALEKS was at last given its official premiere. Judging by the audience's reaction as the end titles rolled this episode lived well up to the 'hype' that had surrounded it for so many years, and if anything even exceeded expectations. The episode was also greatly enjoyed by the subsequent panel of Victor Pemberton, director Morris Barry and of course the ever-radiant Debbie Watling who rightfully chose to bask in the memories of the "good-old-days" when, as Debbie so correctly pointed out: "(DOCTOR WHO) was played for real."

Equally disparaging of today's efforts were the subsequent panel of John Wiles, Paul Erickson, Bill Emms and Nigel Robinson (a kind of a cross between a Hartnell and a writers panel). How sad it was to hear someone like Nigel, who became involved with the WHO novels purely as a result of his love for the show, echoing the belief of most people present that: "DOCTOR WHO is losing its direction." On a lighter and reassuring note, he confirmed that all pre-Season 24 stories have been commissioned as novels bar the Dalek / Doug Adams tales, PLANET OF GIANTS and THE SPACE PIRATES. Bill Emms revealed that his 'Mission to Venus' role-playing gamebook is a rough reworking of a story he originally wrote for Hartnell...after John Wiles had won a battle against Hartnell to go ahead with Emms' GALAXY 4 script !

Following this came a reconstituted episode of THE POWER OF THE DALEKS, linking Christopher Barry's off-screen stills from this story to an off-air recording. The venture might have proven more successful had the lengthy scenes with no dialogue been trimmed. A panel with Philip Martin and Dick Mills rounded off the morning session, but the undisputed hit panel of the weekend was to be first on in the afternoon—Nicholas Courtney, Richard Franklin and, just arrived from Down Under for a London run of Run For Your Wife!, the immensely popular and charismatic Katy Manning, who was initially reluctant to appear as she thought no one would remember who she was, but ended up loving every minute ! The UNIT family atmosphere we hear about so often is easily justified if this panel was anything to go by—there was no bickering, back-stabbing or innuendos (except of the sexual kind at which, it must be said, Katy excels !). Instead all that was witnessed by the extremely receptive audience was a great deal of warmth and love, both for each other and for the show they had together superbly crafted. It was great to see and a reminder of what we once had.

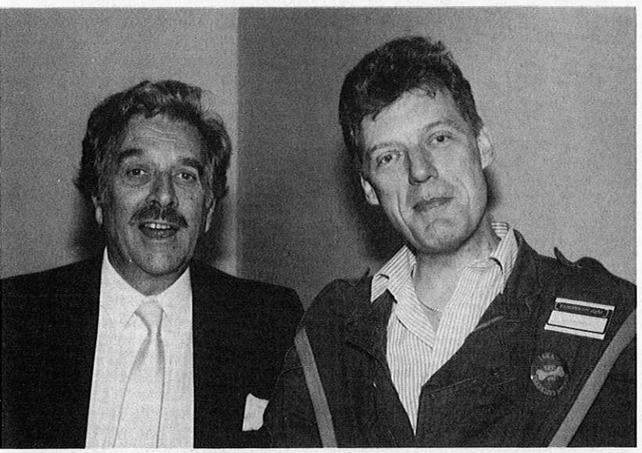
Unfortunately the final panel of Peter Davison, Sarah Sutton and Janet Fielding ended the event on a real downer. Peter Davison proved as naturally quick-witted and entertaining as ever but Sarah Sutton gave the impression that this was just another convention and seemed to make no effort to want to communicate with the audience. However it was Janet Fielding that really let the panel down terribly, coming over extremely blasé and "couldn't care less" and looking as if she'd much rather have stayed at home watching Bullseye ! Her attitude really came over as if she couldn't give a damn for the fans who came to see her and certainly seeing her later, signing autographs with her own personal pile of Janet Fielding black and white photos at £2 a time, really said it all. Any panel would be hard pushed to follow the ebullience of Katy Manning & Co., but the Davison panel, who took delight in continually poking fun at their fellow absent team member Matthew Waterhouse (including pointing out that on the set of KINDA he attempted to instruct Richard Todd how to act!), was painfully amateur in comparison.

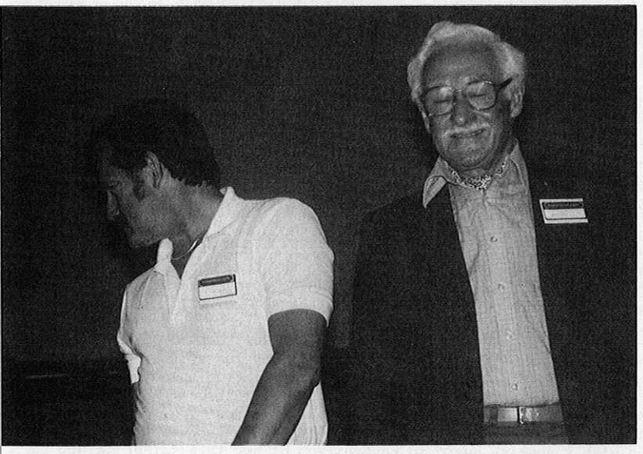
In a touching final ceremony Bob Holmes' daughter was presented with a special award in recognition of her late father's vast legacy to DOCTOR WHO, and that drew the convention to an abrupt end.

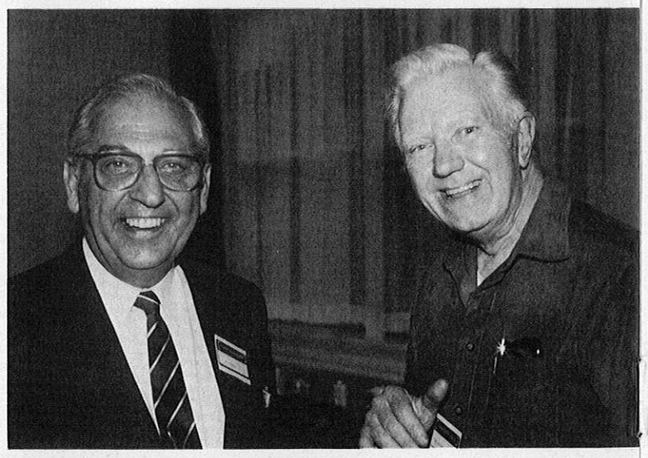
Despite the common complaints such as the sub-standard accommodation facilities, the lack yet again of a 4th Doctor panel and the similarity to previous guest lists (and the lack of any representative from the current season—JN-T failed to appear as prophesied) PanoptiCon VIII was another memorable convention to add to DWAS' successes. With anniversary year fast approaching here's to three DWAS conventions in '88; although nothing has been announced as yet, what better time to resurrect Interface and DWASocial in the spring and summer respectively, leading up to a mammoth PanoptiCon in November ? With next year's notably scarce timetable of conventions (Leisure Hive have called it a day), these conventions would be extremely welcome, so how 'bout it DWAS ?

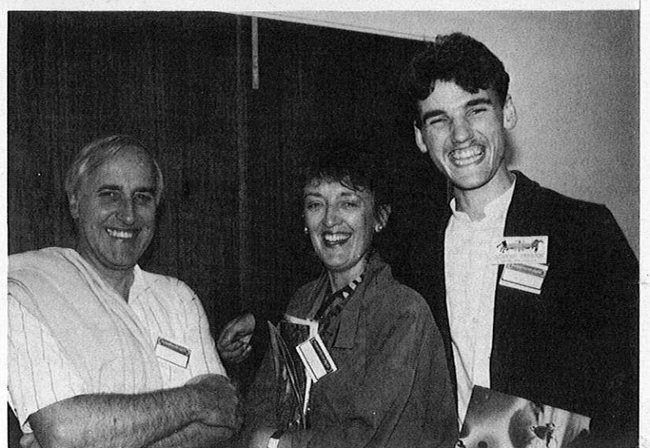
REPORT: Rod Ulm, PHOTOS: Marion Breeze

PHOTO GUIDE: (Opp' page) B.Letts, D.Watling, G.Harper. K.Manning, N.Courtney & Georgie. P.Davison, S.Sutton, J.Fielding. (Overleaf) C.Baker, T.Selby & N.Bryant. N.Courtney, R.Franklin, T.Dicks , B. Baker, V.Pemberton, M.Barry, D.Houghton, P.Erickson, D.Banks , P. Davison, N.Courtney, D.Mills, S.Reid(Alexandra Tynan) & A.Pearson









THE 1986 SERIES SURVEY RESULTS

The response to this year's survey was slightly lower than for our last poll (results in DWB#27) and this can only really be attributable to two factors; one that the voting form appeared in the final issue before our 5 month hiatus and so readers were not reminded to send in their ballots until our return last May, and secondly the curse of "DWapathy"—the term CT once so aptly used to describe lethargic DOCTOR WHO fans—still prevails!! However, the 331 who did bother to participate can at least take some credit in the knowledge that their votes have been closely scrutinized by the BBC and will subsequently go some way towards influencing the choice of future video releases and, who knows, maybe even a repeat season some day!

But of course the main purpose of this exercise is to provide a near-accurate indication of the present likes and dislikes of the fans towards all aspects of DOCTOR WHO as depicted on TV, and there would be little point in staging this poll every other season if our tastes remained static. Indeed this analysis is intended to reflect the changes in voting trends since our previous survey and their possible influencing factors, and once again I have included my own personal votes which have similarly altered slightly compared to the previous analysis (DWB#28).

BEST HARTNELLS: The Hartnell categories will always appear more erratic than the others simply because so few people have seen the programme consistently from the first episode and thus qualify to vote in this section, and so each vote can alter a story's placing quite significantly, especially at the bottom end of the chart. The first two Dalek stories are by far and away the most popular Hartnells, and undoubtably without which DOCTOR WHO would not be around today, so a big hit with both the fans and general public alike! Apart from some minor shufflings in the rest of the chart, the only major occurence is the new entry of MARCO POLO at 11 which can only really be attributed to the recent publication of the longest historical story.

BEST TROUGHTONS: After a static top 5 last time, it is interesting to see THE EVIL OF THE DALEKS surge to pole position, not necessarily due to the retrieval of episode 2 since it only turned up in April and wasn't premiered until September, although I'm sure that everyone who saw it will agree its quality more than justifies its new placing. After all the publicity surrounding Christopher Barry's off-screen stills from POWER OF THE DALEKS, it was perhaps inevitable that Troughton's debut adventure would climb a few notches, but deservedly so as the story—previously a "forgotten" tale—is arguably a classic in its own right. THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMEN climbs back up to number 7 after a temporary lapse, but what can account for the low placing of THE WHEEL IN SPACE in both this, the Worst Troughton and the All-Time Classic categories? A story surely destined for a higher accolade featuring as it does the Cybermen as portrayed by the late great David Whitaker. *BEST PERTWEES (Ed's choice—1) FRONTIER IN SPACE, 2) DAY OF THE DALEKS, 3) THE SEA DEVILS, 4) THE GREEN DEATH, 5) INFERNO, 6=) THE TIME WARRIOR / CARNIVAL OF MONSTERS):* The Auton stories swap places as runner-up to the undisputed Pertwee classic THE DAEMONS, while INFERNO, another once underrated story, continues its relentless rise in popularity. THE DAY OF THE DALEKS improves its position considerably no doubt aided by its release on video, whereas the other two Pertwee / Dalek yarns remain near the bottom of the Pertwee pile, but it will be interesting to see whether the subsequent release of DEATH TO THE DALEKS on video will be enough to influence a higher placing next time around? *BEST BAKERS (Ed—1) CITY OF DEATH, 2) PYRAMIDS OF MARS, 3) GENESIS OF THE DALEKS, 4) HORROR OF FANG ROCK, 5) ROBOTS OF DEATH, 6) CREATURE FROM THE PIT):* THE TALONS OF WENG CHIANG makes a sudden leap up to second position knocking out the previously assumed safe placing of GENESIS OF THE DALEKS and is now a serious threat to the so far undefeated PYRAMIDS OF MARS, but there is no apparent reason for this, unless a lot of people have been getting friends and relatives to send them the video from Down Under! But few can dispute its placing for it reeks of a quality seldom associated with DOCTOR WHO. THE ROBOTS OF DEATH, also recently released on video, enters the top 5 for the first time, but by far the biggest riser is FULL CIRCLE, up fourteen places to number 18, hailed as a classic in its day but soon faded into obscurity. Conversely THE ANDROID INVASION drops a vast 13 positions to number 33, with only GENESIS being overwhelmingly popular out of Terry Nation's five colour stories, and indeed it makes one wonder just how much he really had to do with this story, especially considering Robert Holmes' penchant for rewriting Season 12's scripts! *BEST DAVISONS (Ed-1) CAVES OF ANDROZANI, 2) EARTHSHOCK, 3) FRONTIOS, 4) ENLIGHTENMENT, 5) THE VISITATION, 6) MAWDRYN UNDEAD):* For the 3rd time running Peter Davison's predicatable top 4 remains static and in all there is very little change in this section. *BEST BAKERS(C) (Ed—1) REVELATION OF THE DALEKS, 2) MINDWARP, 3) VENGEANCE ON VAROS, 4)-, 5)-, 6)-)* Like many people I actually found it impossible to vote for 6 stories, such was the dire lack of quality scripts during Colin's brief spell.

WORST HARTNELLS/TROUGHTONS: Again a few erratic occurences with MYTH MAKERS, THE RESCUE and THE CELESTIAL TOYMAKER all making rapid gains, whereas Troughton's chart sees very little change with half of his stories even failing to score, including strangely the aforementioned WHEEL IN SPACE. *WORST PERTWEES(Ed-1) COLONY IN SPACE, 2) MONSTER OF PELADON, 3) PLANET OF THE SPIDERS):* DEATH TO THE DALEKS mysteriously shoots up into 2nd place but it was undoubtably a hit with the public who are less able to distinguish a cliché-ridden Terry Nation script! *WORST BAKERS (Ed-1) MEGLOS, 2) ROBOT, 3) HAND OF FEAR):* Very little change at the summit, although ROBOT makes an unprecedented leap from 35 to number 9, and LOGOPOLIS, HORROR OF FANG ROCK and THE SONTARAN EXPERIMENT also shooting up in the unpopularity stakes. *WORST DAVISONS (Ed-1) TIMEFLIGHT, 2) TERMINUS, 3) THE FIVE DRS WORST BAKERS(C)(Ed-1) THE TWIN DILEMMA, 2) THE MYSTERIOUS PLANET, 3) TIMELASH):* Again very little change in these categories.

It is when all these individual categories are combined to form the All-Time Classics / Clangers charts that the acutest observations can be made. As always CAVES OF ANDROZANI wins the All-Time Classic accolade and certainly there is no disputing its status, but being the only story in recent years to boast such overall extraordinarily high values in all areas of production it has arguably gained more of a cult—as opposed to appreciative—acceptance and one wonders what placing it would have achieved in the more familiar surroundings of Seasons 13 and 14? By far the largest gains are made by Troughton stories (in both runner-up slots and stories like POWER OF THE DALEKS, ABOMINABLE SNOWMEN and INVASION making spectacular gains), whereas it is interesting to note the considerable decline of Colin Baker / Season 22 stories (notably THE 2 DRS from 20 to 59 and ATTACK OF THE CYBERMEN sinking from 35 to 80). As our previous poll was conducted just after this season was screened, it does seem to indicate our habit of blindly praising stories at their time of broadcast. And predictably Nathan-Turner stories now dominate the upper echelons in the Clangers category, once infested with Graham Williams stories, and although Season 21 is often hailed as a classic, it shouldn't be forgotten what it begun and finished with!

As for the individual categories we remain fairly static on our favourite choices, but the introduction of worst choice categories are unanimously won by Nathan-Turner inspired elements of DOCTOR WHO, but I'm sure you don't need me to point to the many probable influencing factors behind his 'victory'...

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COLIN BAKER 1 YEAR ON

A YEAR AGO YOU WERE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE TRANSMISSION OF 'TRIAL OF A TIME LORD'. NOW YOU ARE AN EX-'DOCTOR WHO'. COULD YOU UPDATE US ON YOUR VIEW OF THE TURBULENT EVENTS SINCE THEN.

Well, basically what happened was that this time last year (i.e. August 1986) I had just finished doing TRIAL OF A TIME LORD. We left the studio with a party and I had a nice time and we all said "See you all next year" and I kept in close contact with John Nathan-Turner because as you know we did the conventions and things together. Then when the time came for the option on my contract to be taken up by the BBC, which was the end of October, he rang up and said: *"I don't even know if we're doing the programme – they haven't even told me that I'm producing it next year so I can't take up the option at the moment."* So the option lapsed, then at the beginning of November he rang me up and said: *"Look, I've got a bit of bad news – the programme is going ahead but Michael Grade has instructed me to replace the Doctor."*

HOW DID YOU FEEL AT THAT POINT ?

I was quite surprised ! You know that sort of blood-draining-from-your-veins kind of feeling, and John said he told them he thought it was a dreadful mistake and he wanted me to play the Doctor, but they were adamant: *"Grade says three years is quite enough, he said nothing derogatory about your performance, he thinks you are fine, but he thinks a new Doctor will give the programme a boost so he has ordered me to cast a new Doctor. I have pointed out that you have not done three years and that you have only done 1½ seasons, but he remains adamant that that is long enough and it's time for a change"*, so there was nothing much I could do about it. However three days later I got a phone call from the BBC asking me to go to America with Grade to publicise DOCTOR WHO, which I thought was rather odd, but I agreed to do it on the basis that I might be able to find out some more but he (Grade) avoided me very cleverly throughout the whole time I was there and all I've ever got from anybody – and I've seen Jonathan Powell who is Head of Series and Serials – was nothing but praise but they had decided that three years is enough and there is not much you can do about that. It goes against what I was asked to do when I started the show by David Read – Powell's predecessor – who asked me if I was prepared to commit myself to the programme for four years, because they were sad that Peter had left after only three and they wanted a longer term commitment. So having said yes in 1983 to four years of 26 episodes a year, I actually did one year of 26 episodes (or equivalent), the next year nothing at all, the following year 14 episodes and then I was unceremoniously bundled out, so I felt fairly agrieved.

WHO DID YOU FEEL AGRIEVED AGAINST THE MOST ?

I don't suppose I feel aggrieved against anybody in particular, perhaps Michael Grade because he's somebody at arms length against whom I have no kind of redress or contact whatsoever and who has the power of life and death over my career. Based on the fact that there was a four-year contract going I had made all kinds of long-term commitments like moving house and things like that and to have all that suddenly taken away from you is bloody annoying !

WHAT WAS THE REACTION FROM COLLEAGUES, FRIENDS AND THE MEDIA ?

Well, the majority of colleagues and friends wrote me notes or rang me up to say that "We think this is fairly horrendous and wrong and we sympathise with you enormously", which was very heartening knowing that all those people that one had respected in the business actually put themselves on the line and said "We rate you". Fans reactions vary, I've got hundreds and thousands, literally, of letters from fans being very nice. But I also read fan magazines, which I can't resist reading because they get sent to me, and some of them – as is their right – express their opinion which was that I was bloody awful and it is just as well I was replaced. It is something that you have to take in your stride and every time you read a letter in DOCTOR WHO BULLETIN or any of those like CT that says "Thank God Colin Baker's hammy performance is no longer with us" you cannot help feeling agrieved. The one thing you must NOT do is let it get to you or feel the urge to reply. The only time I have ever replied to anything was one which was a bit below the belt talking about the charity work I was doing, implying that I was using that to get back into a job which was never true.

THIS BRINGS ME TO 'THE SUN' ARTICLE AND FANZINES HAVE OPENLY CRITICISED YOU FOR DOING EXACTLY WHAT YOU HAVE CONDEMNED ERIC SAWARD FOR DOING LAST YEAR.

Not at all. I had a go at Eric Saward because Eric Saward had had a relationship with me and with John Nathan-Turner which on the surface I assumed was an honest relationship. I've said that he used to ring me up at night and moan and moan and John and I would calm him down, but he *never* said anything to John and presumably he didn't think I was very good and he never told me, and I think that is dishonest. On the other hand, I've never had any relationship at all with Michael Grade so I can say what I like about him and I said in that article that he was not particularly kind to me.

DID 'THE SUN' REPORT IT ACCURATELY THOUGH ?

No, not entirely. The arrangement was that I would have copy approval and they came and interviewed me. Basically what they do is string together your answers to their questions as if you had volunteered the information. The only thing I felt I wanted to reply to in the fan press – although I care what they think I *don't* have the urge to reply to it – was the one which said (and I didn't like the headline either): "MY SACKING WILL HIT COT DEATH CASH". I had said I wanted, in the course of this article, to say thank you to the fans who, over the last 3 years, really rallied around and helped me in raising money for the Cot Death Foundation. There was no reason why they should've taken my charity work on but they did, wholeheartedly, and raised a lot of money and I wanted to say thank you. Then comes a question from the reporter: *"I suppose now that you have been sacked they won't be doing that anymore ?"*. No, I suppose they won't, they'll have a new Doctor and quite rightly they'll follow his charity. *"So how do you feel about Michael Grade now that he has deprived cot death cash ?"*. He HASN'T done that, he didn't say "I am going to harm babies", he said "I want a new actor in the part". But they don't print that bit, they print "MY SACKING WILL HIT COT DEATH CASH"! I rang up and said this isn't very good because it looks as if I have said that and they said "But it's true, isn't it ?", and I said yes but not put in those bald terms. Yes, I'd said it, but it was in answer to THEIR question ! They also asked me if I thought it possible that as Michael Grade had worked closely with Liza Goddard, my first wife, he might labour some bias against me for some reason. I replied that I thought that rather unlikely – you don't get to be Controller of programming by indulging in that kind of personal prejudice. Again this was reversed and attributed to me in the article.

CAN I ASK YOU, DID YOU RECEIVE MONEY FOR THAT ARTICLE ?

Of course I did, I wouldn't have done it otherwise. Suddenly I had a whole series of DOCTOR WHO taken away from me and the money came in extremely useful at a very difficult time.

IT WAS REPORTED THAT YOU HAD TURNED DOWN FOUR EPISODES BECAUSE IT WAS PRIME TIME FOR CASTING IN THE THEATRE. WAS THIS REALLY YOUR WAY OF SAYING STUFF THEM, I DON'T WANT ANYMORE TO DO WITH 'DOCTOR WHO' ?

The situation was this. First of all they asked me in November to do the first four episodes after saying they didn't want me. They wanted me to commit myself in November to four weeks work in APRIL ! If I had said yes to that I wouldn't have done Corpse which started in March and has a run until the end of October, so I would have lost six months work for the sake of four weeks work which would have been stupid of me – nobody commits themselves to five months ahead for four weeks work. So I said approach me again in February and they said we need to know now so that we can write the scripts, so in that case I said I ain't doing it. I didn't WANT to do it anyway. It's a bit like saying to somebody "I am your husband / wife, I am going to leave you but I will come back and spend four weeks with you next April"! Would you want to particularly ? I mean, I was quite involved in that part and I wanted a clean break. I told them I won't do the four episodes but I will do the whole series if you want me to leave that much and I'll go at the end, but they wouldn't do that.

DID YOU SEE EPISODE ONE OF 'TIME AND THE RANI' ? APPARENTLY THEY PUT A LOT MORE MONEY INTO IT THAN 'TRIAL OF A TIME LORD'.

No, I didn't see it. I don't know if it is better or worse so I can't really comment, but I can say it would have been nicer if the budget had been bigger all the way through but I think the charm of DOCTOR WHO is that it hasn't always relied upon a large budget so the storylines were not swamped in effects. I think the major problem, if there was a problem, is that I had less good stories per square inch than many of my predecessors did. Even my favourite writer Robert Holmes was not up to vintage Robert Holmes.

BUT WAS THAT THE SCRIPTS OR THEIR TRANSLATION TO THE SCREEN ?

No, I think the scripts were definitely weaker. However you translate it I loved doing THE TWO DOCTORS – I was working with

Pat – but it was not a PYRAMIDS OF MARS and it was not a TALONS OF WENG CHIANG. It just wasn't there, I can't see really how much difference it could make, my Doctor was my Doctor like it or loathe it. People say you should have done more with it but whenever I tried to put stuff in it was very heavily squashed.

SO AFTER FINISHING HOW LONG DID IT TAKE FOR OTHER ACTING OFFERS TO COME IN ?

Well, I was working for John Nathan-Turner actually in panto at Brighton and that finished at the end of January and I knew I was starting Corpse in March so there was only February where I had nothing much to do.

'CORPSE' IS A GODSEND OF A PLAY. HOW DID IT COME ABOUT AND HOW DIFFICULT WAS IT TO ADAPT TO PLAYING RUPERT AND EVELYN, A VERY DEMANDING ROLE, AFTER HAVING DONE TWO AND A HALF YEARS AS THE DOCTOR ?

No difficulty at all. Acting is acting whatever part you are playing. I've always found it easy to get rid of one part and move on to the next one. People say wasn't it difficult getting into the character of the Doctor, but I felt right for the Doctor the very first time I opened my mouth and I did not find it difficult to do. I enjoyed it and it was my version of the Doctor. Every actor has got a Hamlet, it may not be a very interesting Hamlet or a funny Hamlet or a dramatic Hamlet, but it is their Hamlet and it is the same with the Doctor I think. I know that others found it quite daunting starting off in the part but I didn't. I don't find it daunting doing this either, it's hard work but not daunting.

YOU MUST BE AWARE THAT BEING BACK IN THE THEATRE FANS WILL FOLLOW YOU AROUND WHEREVER YOU GO. IT MUST MAKE A GREAT DIFFERENCE TO THE BOX OFFICE ?

Every night there are half a dozen people outside the stage door and they are just the ones who bother to come round and I always think that must be one in ten of the ones who don't. It is marvellous, let's face it that is why they have got me in Corpse, because they hope it will bring people to the box office.

IT'S A NICE FEELING ISN'T IT ?

It is nice actually. I have been amazed because we did this just as a tour at the end of July and it was supposed to end and then suddenly this London theatre became available and the management decided to give it a gamble to see if it would run and we've done eight weeks now and the business is getting better.

AFTER THIS YOU GO ON TO PANTOMIME AT WIMBLEDON IN 'ROBINSON CRUSOE' WHICH YOU'VE DONE BEFORE, BUT WHAT OF YOUR FUTURE AFTER THAT ?

The future is blank from then on. In November I am probably going to the States for a couple of weeks of conventions.

HAVE YOU NOTICED A DROPPING OFF IN INTEREST IN AMERICA AS IT'S BEEN REPORTED THAT THERE ARE LESS AND LESS CONVENTIONS THERE ?

All that has happened is that one of the major convention organisers has stopped doing it and Lionheart Films who distribute BBC programmes in the States have started to put the screws on the others so that they are artificially trying to cut down on the number of conventions by refusing permission to show videos and things like that so that they can get in on the market themselves basically, but I don't think there is any diminishing of interest whatsoever.

I READ IN DWB THAT YOU DIDN'T GET ON TOO WELL WITH TOM WHILE YOU WERE OVER THERE TOGETHER ?

The truth is that Tom is not an easy person to get to know. There are an awful lot of people in this business who become actors because, like me, they are extrovert and bounce in like Tigger going "Worra, worra, worra, here I am !" There are some people who find it quite hard to interact with other people and there are actors who find it quite painful sometimes. And I must admit the first week of doing conventions with Tom was uneasy and I was aware that I had to play it gently because I didn't want him to think I was muscling in on his seven years of territory, and he had avoided contact with the other Doctors before. But by the end – and we were out there 3 weeks together – certainly by the middle period and undeniably towards the end (I can show you photographs of the two of us laughing and joking on the way home on the aeroplane), we got on extremely well, but having said that we are very different people. You know how Jonathan Miller has that vast enthusiasm and mind defying intellect and he's a frightening person because you realise you are not as bright as him ? I'm not saying I'm not as bright as Tom but we have different kinds of brightness. He's incredibly well read. He is the sort of person that if Virginia Woolf was still having meetings with her friends in Bloomsbury – he'd be there ! I wouldn't. So you have to make the effort to find out about him and we got on very well.

I THINK THESE RUMOURS SPRUNG UP BECAUSE IT'S WELL KNOWN HE'S NOT THE EASIEST OF ACTORS TO WORK WITH.

Well I've never acted with him but I would say he doesn't tolerate fools gladly and he's just as likely to think you a fool as not unless you make the effort, whereas I'm the opposite: I approach every person I meet as if they are going to be perfectly alright and amenable until I find out that they are not and then I can be deeply unpleasant to them.

HOW MANY 'NOTS' HAVE YOU FOUND IN YOUR TIME WITH 'DOCTOR WHO'?

Oddly enough in DOCTOR WHO none. You mentioned Eric Saward earlier. My reaction to him was that I was deeply hurt by what he'd said in that article and he'd never had the courage to say it to my face, and I also felt some of the accusations he made against JN-T were unfair. It was certainly true as script editor that he quite rightly made us ring him up to tell him of any changes and when you are in the middle of rehearsal and you want to make a change for whatever reason: "Oh, you'd better ask Eric, he gets upset if you don't." So you go across and Eric's not there, John was always there and he says John was swanning off all over the place. I think Eric was jealous because he never got invited to American conventions whereas John was over there quite a lot. That kind of rankled him. As I said in the other DWB interview I did, that article said more about Eric Saward than John Nathan-Turner. We've all got our faults, I've always tried to be honest though, and when a newspaper offered me a sum of money for my DOCTOR WHO 'revelations' I said: *"I'm prepared to talk about the way I feel about my dismissal but I am not going to talk about any individuals that I've worked with or their private lives"*, and however many times you read that article there is nothing in there. The only thing I revealed was about Nicola Bryant being married and she didn't mind because I asked her first. The only thing I questioned was the way it was put together. The first day they got the copy to me in time for me to approve it but the second day they didn't and it was re-edited to suit them and I got an apology from them. But it does make me angry when fans single out things like Colin Baker bleating about his cot death work in order to get his job back.

IT DOES SEEM THAT YOU HAVE BEEN VERY BADLY TREATED SINCE YOU BECAME 'DOCTOR WHO' AND THE PROGRAMME DOES SEEM TO HAVE JINXED YOUR CAREER SLIGHTLY, SO WHY DO YOU RETAIN THIS FONDNESS FOR IT WHICH YOU MUST, DO OTHERWISE YOU WOULDN'T BE TALKING TO ME.

If I had known all that when I accepted the job I wouldn't have done it probably. If you had said to me, "I am offering you a year's work, then a year off, then half a year", I'd have said, "On yer bike!" I wouldn't have wanted to do it, but having done it it is certainly the best job I have ever done. I loved working with the people, I loved working with John enormously – I know he comes in for a lot of stick but I think it's miraculous that he stays on doing it – I wouldn't have had the patience !! It's a tribute to his staying power that he is prepared to put up with all the flak from the fans. So those of you who criticise us for going to American conventions rather than British ones – the fan reaction is very different. Over there they are fans because they like it and they tend to say nice things about us, their criticism taken in a context that the rest of the time they are fairly pleasant. Whereas if I pick up a fan magazine in this country I'm more likely to read that I'm bloody awful, that I'm a ham, that I'm over the top – which is missing the entire point of my Doctor because it was *deliberately* over the top !! I believe I cared about the programme in terms of its context within the history of the programme rather more than some of my predecessors did and I just think it's ironic that I was the one that was sacked – it was pure bad timing. Whichever Doctor had been playing the part when Michael Grade came into the BBC would have been subject to his plans.

WHICH ONE EPISODE WOULD YOU PICK AS A SHOWCASE FOR YOUR DOCTOR ?

I guess episode 13 of TRIAL OF A TIME LORD is the one that springs to mind. That was Robert Holmes' last episode and whatever anybody says he was still the best – even when he was failing he was still the best. I thought that was a combination of a very good idea which didn't totally work, and I'll give you an example why: The second story MINDWARP was quite difficult to do as an actor because there were scenes when I said to the director, *"Look, in this scene is it the Matrix lying, is it the Doctor pretending to be mad, is he really mad or is the Matrix lying about any of those possibilities ?"*, and he said, *"Dunno, you'd better ask Eric."* So I asked Eric who said, *"I dunno, you'd better ask Philip Martin."* And when asked Philip Martin told me to ask Eric as he'd told him what to write anyway. So that sort of casual attitude to producing a script doesn't give the actor very far to go and I had to work it out for myself and I think that is a bit slapdash, and if you are to do a complicated story like TRIAL OF A TIME LORD where we are to believe that The Valeyard has been re-editing bits of the Matrix so as to tell specific lies about the Doctor amongst the evidence, then the people editing and writing the bloody thing ought to know! So all that bit on the rock, the attitude to my question, *"Was it real ? Did it ever happen ?!"*, was, *"Oh, dunno. . . better play it as if it did."*

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED AT THE STRAND THEATRE ON SEPTEMBER 22nd BY ROBERT COPE, WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO COLIN BAKER.

a waste of time and the rani

FREDDIE WRIGHT: There must be something wrong with me, and I'm probably in the minority, but I am enjoying TIME AND THE RANI which is brilliant, despite what the critics are saying. Sylvester McCoy is getting a lot of flak for his infuriating Scottish lilt, but when you think about it it's just as absurd to have a Gallifreyan speaking in an Oxfordian English accent! Jane Baker and her stooge have actually included plot and characters and the acting is excellent, especially Pickering and Ventham. Kate O'Mara is more O T T and t h i g h - slappingly pantomimesque than before—but it is a JN-T production afterall...

JOHN RICHARDS: After a shaky start this story picked up with part 2 and finished off quite nicely. Generally the script was pleasing if a little empty . Andrew Morgan made an impressive debut with excellent visual effects and great cliff - hangers. Kate O'Mara stole the show both as the Rani and with her startlingly cruel impersonation of poor Bonnie. Mel is charming, no more a screamer than Zoe or Jo, and it's too early to judge on Sylvester, but so far I've got few complaints and he's much better than Davison or Colin Baker...

SIMON COLENUTT: Despite fairly shoddy plotting and a totally redundant episode two, Andrew Morgan managed to inject an excitement (especially the cliffhangers) into the proceedings. By no means a classic or a brilliant debut for Sylvester McCoy, but an interesting four weeks of WHO before the unveiling of the Cartmel scripts.

PAUL DUMONT: On the basis of his first few episodes, Sylvester McCoy is a far more interesting Doctor to watch than the previous two: he has a presence that Davison rarely had. Unfortunately he has inherited from Colin Baker a clowning, over the top pantomime aspect—dancing round the Rani's control panel with Mel, running away Scooby Doo-like from the Rani—and I was saddened to see him shove a Tetrap into a trap. I thought that the brutality had gone out with Colin Baker. On the bonus side Sylvester can play the spoons and use his accent to good sneering effect. On the minus side are the mixed metaphors beginning to drag now, but never as dreadful as knacker's / scrap / Totter's Lane junk-yard variants last season. Hopefully these will disappear as quickly as Colin Baker's penchant for literary quotations. It's certainly not a classic, but Sylvester McCoy, even when saddled with Bonnie Langford and a pantomime producer, is very promising . Next season, with a new companion, a new script editor and a new Doctor in their stride and, PLEASE, PLEASE a new producer, should be an anniversary season as good as five and 10...

MICHAEL SMITH: The new titles are flashy and trashy, Mel is the worst companion since Adric and a lot of scenes that should have been powerful were devoid of all impact. The "ferocious" Tetraps were unconvincing and cuddly looking and why was a bare wire used to break an electrical circuit? After last year's fiasco it is a positive leap forward...

TIM MUNRO: I can truthfully say it was the most embarrassing thing I have ever sat through. If this was the "wittier" show we were promised, then come back Graham Williams ! The sight of Kate O'Mara do-

(YOUR VIEWS continued opposite page)

AS PART of an intensive study of ROBOT for the forthcoming C M S publication IN-VISION (the follow-on from SPACE AND TIME), I have of course looked quite closely at how previous Doctors have been introduced. William Hartnell had a whole new series and concept to edge him in—and indeed does not appear until the rest of the regular cast have been introduced. Patrick Troughton was eased into the public gaze by the promise of Daleks and the delivery of a complex yet not too complicated plot. Jon Pertwee was helped by the horrific novelty of the Nestene Autons and the familiarity of the UNIT set-up, Tom Baker . . . but you must read IN-VISION for my comments on that (along, by the way, with those of Barry Letts, Terrance Dicks, Chris Barry, Jim Acheson, and even people as obscure as—wait for it—Jeremy Bentham !!).

But what has all this to do with TIME AND THE RANI ? I hear a cry from the back row. Only this—after four episodes I still have a problem that I never encountered with any of the first four Doctors. . . I'm not convinced that Sylvester McCoy really *i s* the Doctor ! I'm willing to be convinced, I'm waiting to be convinced, and I'm sure that I shall be convinced—but I'm also sure that as a vehicle for a new Doctor, TIME AND THE RANI failed.

As a DOCTOR WHO story it just about limped by. In fact parts of it were really quite good—but then, that's what the oft-misquoted curate said. It goes almost without saying that parts of were also quite bad. And there's a lot to be said for guilt by association. So, overall I was not terribly disappointed (partly because of my old-world cynicism, and partly because after seven years in the post, and even with a new script editor, any producer is bound to become somewhat predictable), but by the same standards, I was not terribly impressed either.

But, to begin at the beginning. . . We open with some computer graphic effects that are characteristic also of the new titles—flawless, yet too clean to be quite believable. Odd though it sounds after years of complaining about wobbly models , too much precision (as here) makes for unreality. Everything in both the titles and those opening effects shots is just too smooth to be convincing. This is acceptable in the titles (apart from that awful wink which—thank goodness—was dropped from part 4), but not so in what purports to be 'reality'. Perhaps this is the hub of the problem—if the programme did not attempt to be seen as 'real' then this criticism would not be valid. But it does so it is.

Anyway, never mind about the packaging—what about the merchandise. . ? How does Sly shape up as the Doctor ? Well, it has to be said that he starts out looking too much like the theatrically experienced actor that he is. But after that terribly over-the-top bit with him falling over his own umbrella, he settles down into a bit of healthy amnesia, plays with some spoons (more of that please—healthy eccentricity), and begins to get a grip on the role. He's still too fallible of course, but that seems to be a characteristic of the JN-T Doctor. Peter Davison was always "Of course, I should have realised," while Colin always got it just plain wrong. Sylvester seems to be getting it right (he thinks) too late. Compare these with Tom Baker's immediate air of authority—telling Harry where to get off, worrying the Brigadier by his attempts to leave, and deducing the weight of his mechanical opponent from a crushed flower. . . Today the Doctor wins by chance, and we can be forgiven for thinking that he is no cleverer than ourselves—just plain lucky with the gift of the gab.

But that said, I think that Mr McCoy will improve as and when he is given the freedom to develop his role into more of his own eccentric and entertaining personality . I shall be impressed with him in the future, I am sure, which is more than I can say for the new version of the theme music. And this is odd, because what tension and suspense there is in TIME AND THE RANI is largely built up by the incidental music—particularly towards the end of (the rather boring) part three, and throughout part four. Almost a return to the good old (?) days of Paddy Kingsland and Peter Howell.

And talking of things old—or rather, from the past—isn't it odd that neither Mel nor the Rani managed to ease the new Doctor into the role quite as UNIT has twice , or the Daleks managed that first, critical, time ? Of course, in Mel's case it may simply be that she needs dialogue written by someone other than Mr and Mrs Baker for a change. In the case of Kate O'Mara, it is not a failing but merely a fact that guest stars a r e increasingly camping up their parts on the show. Ms O'Mara is far less to blame than most in this respect, but the problem is still manifest. But then, who but Kate O'Mara could almost pull off such lines as: *"I have the layhargil—nothing can stop me now!"*

The most redeeming feature of MARK OF THE RANI was the dialogue. Listen to that and you might not be too bothered that there wasn't really a coherent story. However, the Bakers seem to have let this jewel in their small tiara vanish somewhat. It's all very well to say that Wanda Ventham was wasted, Kate O'Mara was over the top, Donald Pickering was under the top, and Mark Greenstreet didn't seem to know what show he was in, but it is as well to qualify such comments by looking at the material such talented actors and actresses are given to perform. Wanda Ventham is given nothing apart from a brief and left-handed mourning scene; Mark Greenstreet is asked to portray a character who cares deeply for his race—so deeply that he pours away the antidote to a potential for its destruction; Donald Pickering has to keep making the point that nobody understands why he has to help the Rani—least of all himself, one suspects; and even Bonnie Langford is given such classic lines as: *"I know about regeneration, of course"*, which is followed by a catalogue of the things she *doesn't* know about it (as if this c o u l d pardon her from stating the obvious in quite such a gauche way—remember all those terrible '50s movies where the difficult bits of the plot were explained with the suffix, *". . .as you well know, professor"*?).

Again, this would be excusable if the plot hung together. It doesn't. Naive viewers (by which I mean children of between nine and ninety, but closer to nine) have asked me such questions as: Why don't the Lakertyans just leave their Pleasure Dome to escape the nasty video effects ? Why does the Rani need the Lakertyans anyway ? Where d i d that brain come from ? And what's it doing ? What are all those Tetraps up to? Where are they from ? And why does it take 10 of them in the last episode to wander over and tell the Lakertyans to put on their silly little bracelets ? What's plasma got to do with anything ? Why do the Lakertyans keep the "right sort of wire" ornaments ? Why did Beyus stay with the brain and get blown to bits ? Where does that rocket end up and who does it blow apart ? And why does the Rani have to spin people round and round before exploding them ? Of course, I do—after studying DOCTOR WHO mythos for several years—have an answer to that last question . . . the Rani spins people round and round before exploding them because it's more efficient than just turning them into trees . . .

But what of the production then ? Given that JN-T is the producer of dross , sorry , gloss, how does it look ? Well, it looks (surprise, surprise) glossy. That is to say the video images and harsh lighting keep everything too sharp to build up any real atmosphere, and everything has a sort of sheen that one doesn't expect to stand up to close inspection—which is one of the less disappointing aspects of the show.

The redeeming feature (apart from the cast's attempts to rise above the script—Sylvester and Kate O'Mara in particular) is the Tetraps. Okay, so there are about ten of them when the story only needs two (well, none would probably suffice), but they l o o k good and move well. Apart from their silly guns they are quite impressive. We can believe that they capture the Rani at the end (after the double bluff where we all think Urak will change sides earlier on in part four). A pity that their four-way vision wasn't used more; when it was (*"Urak—get in here!"*) it worked well—the Doctor or Mel being selected from the diverse and contradictory images. And another thing—they're bat-like etc. but can they fly ? If not, why not ? And if they can, why didn't they? That could have made them immensely more menacing.

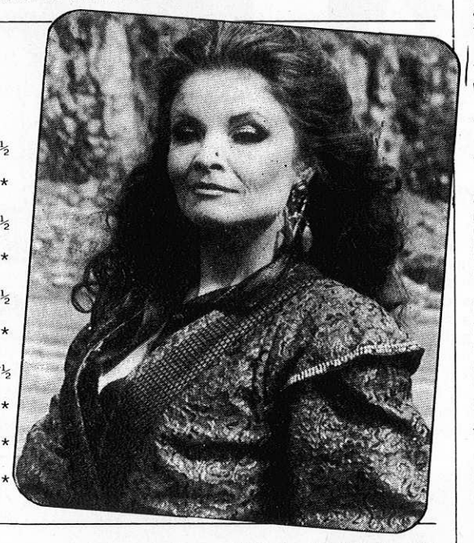
So perhaps it's the effects side of things that wins through. Although the computer graphics are too 'clean', they are impressive. Although the exploding globes are pointless, they are well conceived. Although the rocket's mission remains rather a mystery (Rani up to no good—need we understand more ?), the model work is effective. The costumes are pretty but again too clean (doesn't anybody on Lakertya ever get their feet muddy ?), and the 'by-the-way' effects (such as the Doctor remembering Mel as he looks at the Rani) work well. Even the C S O isn't too distracting.

So, the verdict then. Well, rather like the initial reaction—fairly mediocre DOCTOR WHO and hardly the sort of script (by which I mean dialogue and characterisation m o r e than anything else) that can convincingly launch a new Doctor. Let's just hope that PARADISE TOWERS at least has a story behind it all . . .

Star Rating

36%

SCRIPT	½
ORIGINALITY	*
DIRECTION	***½
ACTING	*
SETS	*½
COSTUMES	*
MONSTERS / ENEMIES	*½
SPECIAL EFFECTS	****
MUSIC	***
OVERALL STORY	*



ing her Bonnie Langford impersonation while Sylvester waddled along behind was puerile, juvenile and achieved what I thought to be impossible—it made me ashamed to be a DOCTOR WHO fan! However the production values were a great improvement on t h e tackiness of TRIAL—large solid sets, impressive F.X. and that stunning long-shot of the Rani's domain, asisted no end by the appointment of (shock, horror) a talented director! The title sequence is splendid, up to the appearance o f that pathetic winking silver Doctor and t h e crumby light entertainment logo (why the whole thing can't be in solid steel blocks instead of just the WHO part defeats me). Even the theme tune is impressive. Still, what's a bit of extra gloss worth when a script's this bad ? Put plainly, it stinks. Sylvester's first scene reminded m e of those send-ups of DOCTOR WHO which Crackerjack used to do. Hasn't JN-T realised that humour doesn't mean sending the show up ? It's so original too, I mean, where do the Bakers get their ideas from. It's unfair to judge him yet, but I have to say McCoy's debut was the worst yet. He played the role as if he'd just escaped from a panto; every word, every gesture was completely overdone. This is a Doctor for the youngest kids in the audience; a hammy , cliché Doctor beside whom one can see that Colin Baker's Doctor was a damn sight better than we thought. I feel more than ever that Colin should've stayed and JN-T been booted out. Sadly I can see hints of a good Doctor struggling to get out — one wonders how much of this Children's Hour performance was Sylvester's and how much has been ordained by JN-T. (A piece of audience research from my place of work: out of ten non-fans who watched part one, none expressed enthusiasm, and comments ranged from "Load of old cobblers" to "The new Doctor is crap." After September 7 a lot of people turned off and will not be coming back).

ANDREW HARDWICK: The worst Pip 'n' J a n e effort to date—a plot that must've taken all of 30 seconds to dream up; Doctor and companion are seperated, companion meets friendly natives, token monster stalks the terrain, someone from Gallifrey abusing time travel. . .and a typically erratic Doctor and the predictable "What shall I wear" scene. We had Kate O'Mara glossily attired a n d reprising her bitchy Dynasty role, Bonnie Langford and her bright yellow Lakertyan pals trying to sneak inconspicuously around the landscape . . . I really cannot see this glossily-packaged garbage appealing to anyone. Badly acted, badly scripted, colourful, and today's DOCTOR WHO comes nearest to farce, but farce is supposed to be laughed at—we're talking about drama here—a science fiction programme that should be going all out to be credible. The fact is that there is no other programme on TV today that can match DOCTOR WHO for sheer mediocrity and unprofessionalism.

ADAM STEPHENS: I've booked up early f o r this year's pantomime: it's got a baddie played by Kate O'Mara complete with outrageous hair, costume and sexy voice, the principle boy is superbly played by Bonnie Langford (she's SO at home in pantomime), but my favourite is Sylvester McCoy as the schoolboy hero! He's so funny, he winks at the audience, does a lot of dressing up and behaves like Charlie Chaplin! The show has lots of bangs and flashes and my verdict is the kids'll love it (a shame it starts too late for any of them to see it though !).

EDWIN FEREDAY: Where is the drama? Where is the tension ? Where is the credibility? Where is the plot ? Where is the originality ? Where is the acting ? Where i s the director ?

Why the slapstick ? Why the glitz (why the glitter) ? Why the timeslot ? W h y waste money ? Why watch it ?

And most importantly, WHO is responsible for the All New DOCTOR WHO Laughter Show ? (I think we can all answer at least one of the above questions!).

A.STEPHENS: I am utterly amazed and stunned at the sheer . . . CRAP of this story . With plot holes as large as the planet Lakertya and wooden posts masquerading a s actors . . . typical, bloody typical JN-T.

DARREN SHORT: TIME AND THE RANI shocked me profoundly. I cannot believe that a B B C producer on a salary paid with public money is allowed to churn out such audaciously packaged rubbish. There is no comparison between DOCTOR WHO of 1963-77 and this. No plot was even hinted at until episode four, Sylvester McCoy was entirely unconvincing and Bonnie Langford was, well, Bonnie Langford. As witnessed on O p e n Air, Nathan-Turner will no doubt hasten to tell us that "It's not panto, there ' s NO slapstick...", but surely even Graham Williams would never have dared present for transmission scenes such as those between the Doctor and Mel in episode two. No suspense, no conviction, nothing but tiresome chases and uninspiring misquotes . . . t h e show I grew to love has been strangled t o near-death and I have no desire to watch the rest of the the season.

GARETH DAVIES: What a LOAD OF RUBBISH ! ! There is NO story, NO acting, it's a pantomime. I will no longer disbelieve you , please accept my full apologies (re: letters).

JONATHAN BURT: I am appalled at the bastardised product we are being forced t o watch. I am feeling angry and disillusioned after months of anticipation and the normal D W M propaganda. Sylvester is sending the part up and Ms Langford is incapable of pulling off even o n e convincing scene. The show is reduced to an embarrassing sit-com and even The Independent's described it as "a fun spoof"! I hope N-T is finally satisfied with the final destruction of the concepts and criterions of DOCTOR WHO—he is to producing what a two year old would be at Number 10. I hope he leaves before there's NO programme to leave.

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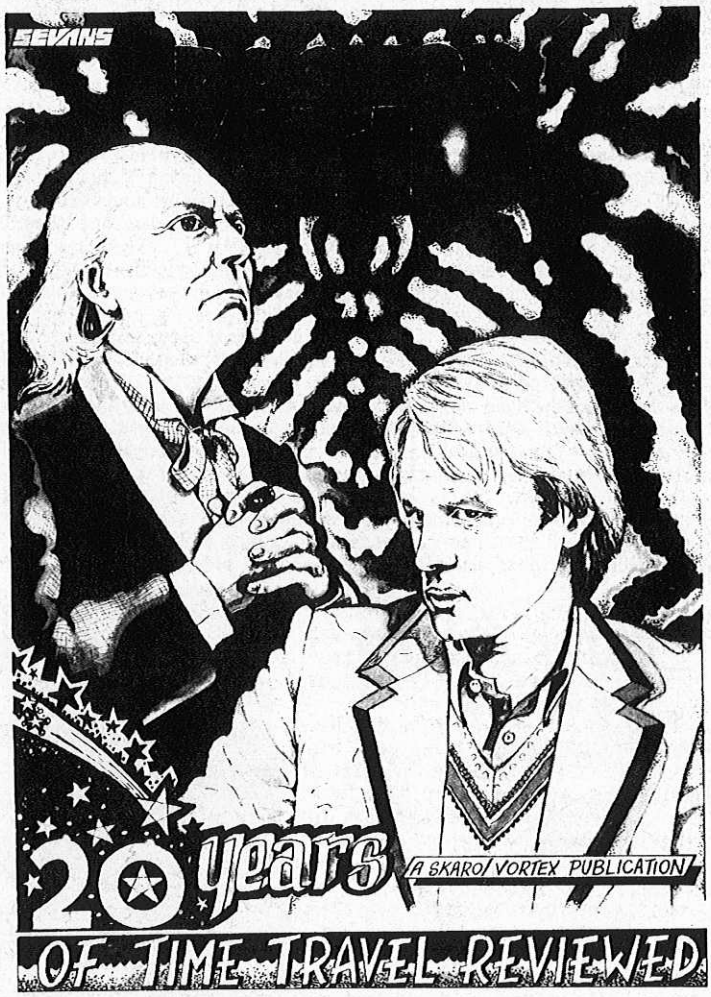

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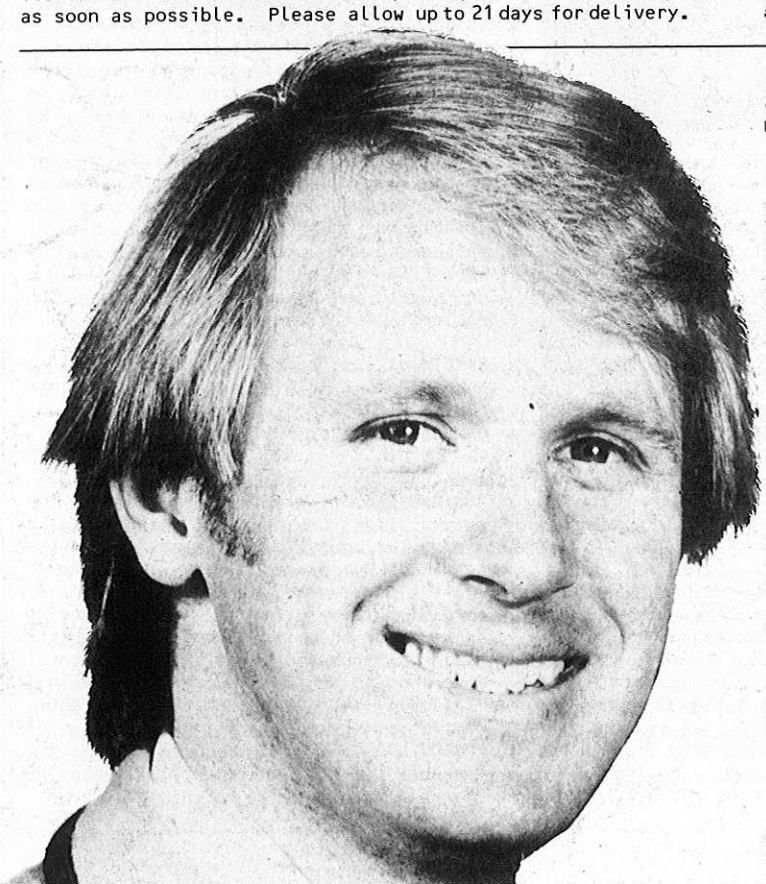

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